

The greatest hits

Critical Challenge

Critical tasks

- A. Select the five most significant events in Canada during a specified period.
- B. Design a commemorative coin featuring one of the selected events.

Overview

In this two-part challenge, students learn about the relative historical significance of key events during a designated period (in this case, between 1960 and 1985) and design coins to commemorate the five most significant of these events. Students generate an expansive list of key events for an assigned time period and narrow these to a short list of about ten events. After discussing criteria for historical significance, they collect information about an assigned event to help them determine its historical significance. In groups, students agree on the five most significant events from their assembled list, and share their conclusions with the rest of the class. In preparation for the second challenge, students explore the criteria for an effective commemorative coin as they examine samples assembled by the teacher. They then prepare a draft design for a coin for one of the five most significant events. Finally, students critique a draft design created by other students prior to completing a final design.

Objectives

Broad understanding

The significance of past events is determined partly by the relevance that contemporary people attach to those events.

Requisite tools

Background knowledge

- knowledge of important social, political, and economic events for the period under consideration

Criteria for judgment

- criteria for historical significance (e.g., prominence at the time, consequences, insights into the period)
- criteria for a powerful commemorative design (e.g., clearly recognizable features, captures important features, aesthetically pleasing, evokes strong sentiments, offers a balanced perspective)

Critical thinking vocabulary

Thinking strategies

- rating chart
- critique chart

Habits of mind



A
Featured topic:
*significant events
between 1960
and 1985*

Suggested Activities

Pre-planning

Assemble resources

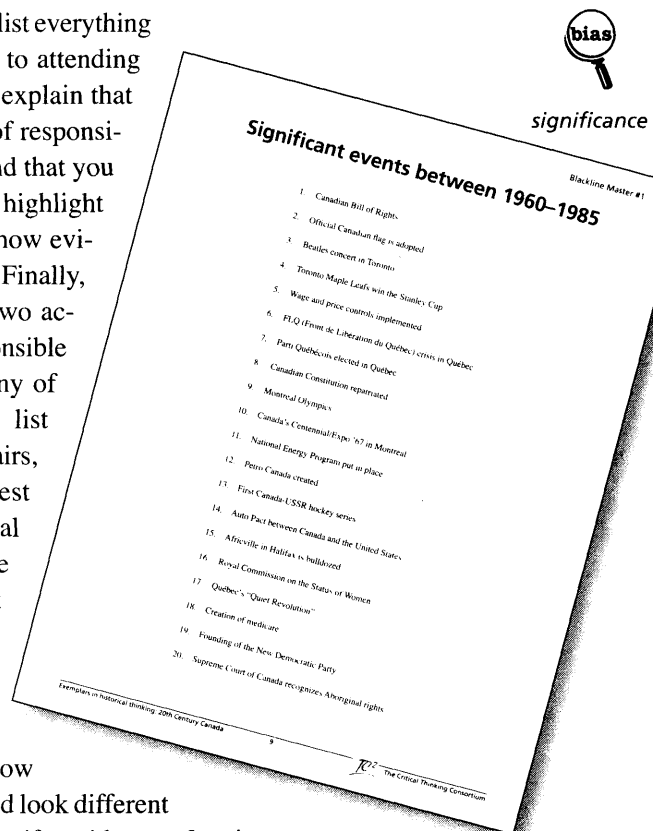
- Assemble various textbooks, encyclopedias, timelines, and online sources that provide concise overviews of the designated period in Canadian history (in this case, 1960–1985). As well, locate samples or pictures of commemorative coins (e.g., Olympic coins, coins commemorating historical milestones). Images of coins can be found on the Royal Canadian Mint website (www.mint.ca).

Session One

Blackline Master #1

Introduce the concept of significance

- Invite students individually to list everything they did during the day prior to attending class. After making their list, explain that you are looking for patterns of responsible behaviour among teens and that you would like them to circle or highlight the actions on their list that show evidence of their responsibility. Finally, invite students to select the two actions that best exemplify responsible behaviour. Point out that many of their actions are not on the list (e.g., breathing, walking up stairs, brushing their teeth). Suggest that actions considered trivial or not connected to a purpose were not recorded and that their list reflects their sense of what was significant or worth recording.



Explore implications of purpose

- Invite students to consider how their selection of actions would look different if they had been asked to identify evidence of eating or consumer habits. Inform students that historical significance is to some measure dependent on the questions we ask about the past. For example, annual average rainfall for a particular decade may be irrelevant to an economic historian and important to an environmental historian. Pose the question: "What might make a historical event significant to a country?"

Introduce the two challenges

- Introduce the critical challenge by informing students that Canada's 150th birthday is approaching and that the Royal Canadian Mint is commissioning a series of coins commemorating Canadian historical events. Invite students to assume that the class has been asked to contribute designs for five coins commemorating the most significant milestones during a specified period. Their two-part challenge is to select the five most significant events and design coins that capture the importance of these events for Canadians.

**Assemble list of
noteworthy events**

- Invite students in groups to assemble a list of 20 or more noteworthy events for the period under consideration by perusing several sources, including textbooks, scrapbooks, and online sources. A list of 20 noteworthy events in Canadian history from 1960-1985 is found on *Significant events between 1960–1985* (Blackline Master #1). Encourage students to identify factors (e.g., involves many people, has long-lasting impact) to help them narrow their list to ten events.

Opportunity for differentiation: Assist some learners in identifying clues that might indicate key events (e.g., use of headings, boldface highlighting, featured images, indexes).

Session Two

Blackline Master #2

**Introduce criteria for
historical significance**

- Introduce the Richter scale as a concept to help students understand historical significance. Begin by discussing the impact an earthquake would have on their community if it registered a “1” on the scale (e.g., hardly be noticed, have no impact). What about a “9” (e.g., devastating, enormous loss of life)? Suggest to students that we can examine historical events using a similar scale. A historical event that has little or no impact would be considered a “1” on a historical Richter scale; while an event would be considered a “9” if it had an enormous effect. Present the following more specific criteria for assessing historical significance:
 - **Prominence at the time.** Was it noticed at the time as having importance?
 - **Consequences.** What effect did the event have subsequently?
 - *Magnitude of impact.* How deeply felt or profound was its impact?
 - *Scope of impact.* How widespread was its impact?
 - *Duration of impact.* How long-lasting were its effects?
 - **Revealing of the period.** Does it inform our understanding of a historical issue or period?



*criteria for
historical
significance*

**Identify
information needs**

- Invite students to consider their short list of 10 events in light of the criteria for historical significance. In groups, ask students to identify additional information they require about each event to make a reasonable assessment of its significance. Once groups have identified what more they need to learn, suggest that they allocate the events among the group members to conduct their research.

Conduct research

- Encourage students to gather information about their assigned events by considering the established criteria for significance. For each assigned event, provide students with a copy of *Considering significance* (Blackline Master #2) to help them gather and organize information. Remind students that their notes should include only relevant and accurate information, contain all the important facts, and be restated in their own words.



knowledge of
historical period



rating chart

Blackline Master #2

Considering significance

Name: _____

Event: _____
Description: _____

Prominence at the time: Was it noticed at the time as having importance?	Lasting nature of impact: How long- lasting were its effects?	Magnitude of impact: How deeply felt or profound was its impact?	Scope of impact: How widespread was its impact?	Revealing of the times: Does it inform our under- standing of the period?	
					4
					3
					2
					1
					4
					3
					2
					1
					4
					3
					2
					1
					4
					3
					2
					1

Examples in Historical Thinking: 20th Century Canada

Total score: _____ /20

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Opportunity for differentiation: Expect all students to research at least one event; invite others to research up to three events. Provide some students with selected accessible sources of information, invite others to locate their own sources.

Assessment for learning: Assess student notes recorded on Blackline Master #2 before moving on.

Session Three

Present the first critical task

- Invite students to share the information they collected about their assigned events with other members of their group. Present the critical task:

Select the five most significant events in Canada during a specified period.

Encourage the groups to reach consensus on the five most significant events in light of the criteria for historical significance. Suggest that the groups sort their ten events into three categories: very significant, somewhat significant, and least significant. Students should eliminate the least significant events and discuss the other two categories until

there are exactly five events identified as being most significant. Ask each group to write the names of the selected events on separate index cards and to prepare a brief oral report on each event. Suggest that students use a copy of Blackline Master #2 to organize their presentation for each of the five key events.

Share selected events

- Arrange for each group to display its selected key events by attaching the index cards along a giant timeline assembled at the front of the class. After all groups have explained their choices, invite each group to reconsider its choices in light of the other groups' comments. You may want to agree as a class on the five most significant events or encourage groups to determine their own selections.

Session Four

Blackline Master #3

Share sample commemorative designs

- Show the class several samples or reproductions of commemorative coins that you have assembled. Ask students to rank order the designs from the most to least effective. Ask students when discussing their rankings to identify the reasons for their decision. Develop a tentative list of the criteria for a powerful commemorative coin:

- has clearly recognizable figures (i.e., images are large enough to be recognizable when reduced to the size of a one-dollar coin);
- captures important features of the event (i.e., details key aspects of the event or its impact);
- is aesthetically pleasing (i.e., not cluttered, sense of balance);
- evokes strong sentiments of the event—has an iconic image (i.e., prompts vivid images of the event and its lasting impact on Canada).



criteria for a commemorative coin

Discuss the importance of iconic images

- Ask students what makes an image iconic (e.g., provides a powerful symbol that is recognizable and evocative)? As an example, ask students which of the following best captures the role of hockey in Canadian culture: the Stanley Cup, an ice rink, or Wayne Gretzky's #99 hockey sweater. Invite students to explain their choice for the most iconic symbol of hockey in Canada.

Consider potential controversies

- Introduce students to the potential controversies surrounding iconic images by relating the following incident involving a commemorative design:

In 2007, the Royal Canadian Mint released a \$20 silver coin to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the International Polar Year. The coin depicted Arctic explorer Martin Frobisher, an Inuit kayaker, a polar bear, a sailing ship, and other images. Inclusion of the image of an Inuit kayaker was disturbing to many in the Inuit community because it was reminiscent of the kidnapping by Frobisher of an Inuit man. In 1576, while searching for the Northwest Passage, Frobisher and his men captured an Inuit man. Frobisher brought the unnamed captive and his kayak back to England for display. Unfortunately, the Inuit man died from disease soon after his arrival in Europe.

—Based on “Coin evokes grim past for Inuit, leader says” *Canadian Press*, July 20, 2007.



Prepare commemorative design

Invite students to identify the Inuit’s complaint about the commemorative coin and to speculate about other concerns the Inuit may have had. Encourage students to suggest modifications to the design that might address the Inuit’s concerns.

➤ Present the second critical task:

Design a commemorative coin featuring one of the selected events.

Encourage students to search the internet or relevant print sources for powerful iconic images to represent their chosen events. Distribute copies of *Assessing the commemorative design* (Blackline Master #3) to remind students about the criteria for an effective design. Explain that students are to prepare a draft design that will be critiqued by another student prior to creating a final design.

Blackline Master #3

Assessing the commemorative design

	Outstanding	Well Developed	Competent	Meets minimum expectations	Underdeveloped
Recognizable figures	All figures in the design are easily identifiable.	All figures in the design are identifiable, but a few may require some guess.	Most, but not all, of the figures in the design are identifiable.	Some figures in the design are identifiable, but others are very difficult to interpret.	Very few figures in the design are identifiable.
Important features	The most important aspects associated with the event are represented in the design.	The most important aspects associated with the event are somewhat represented in the design.	Most, but not all, of the important aspects associated with the event are represented in the design.	A few important aspects are represented in the design, but other key aspects are omitted.	Very few of the important aspects associated with the event are represented in the design.
Visually appealing	The design is arranged in an especially effective and visually appealing manner.	The design is competently arranged and generally appealing.	Most aspects of the design are arranged in an interesting and appealing way.	A few aspects of the design are arranged in an interesting way but other aspects disrupt the effect.	The design appears very cluttered or otherwise unappealing.
Evocative images	The images powerfully present the significance of the event.	For the most part, the images vividly present the significance of the event.	Most of the images present the significance of the event.	A few images present the significance of the event, but key aspects are not powerfully represented.	The images do not present the significance of the event.
Balanced representation	The images sensitively reflect various perspectives and include all the main perspectives of the event.	The images are generally sensitive to a variety of perspectives and include all the main perspectives on the event.	The images are sensitive to some of the perspectives of the event.	The images represent more than one point of view but do not capture all the main perspectives of the event.	Images present a narrow or one-sided view of the event.

Comments:

Name:

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Opportunity for differentiation: Require all students to design one coin, individually or with a partner; invite others to design two.

Critique coin designs

- Invite students to use the rubric on Blackline Master #3 to critique another student's draft design. Ask students to comment on three strengths of the design and to list up to three aspects of the design that might be improved. Remind students that they should consider various groups that have been affected by the event when determining whether or not the design represents a balanced perspective. Distribute a copy of *Coin critique* (Blackline Master #4) for students to record their feedback and suggested modifications on.



critique chart

Coin critique Blackline Master #4

Name: _____

Event: _____

Positive aspects of the design

1
2
3

Areas for improvement

	Explanation	Suggested modification
1		
2		
3		

Exemplars in Historical Thinking: 20th Century Canada

12

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Prepare final design

- Arrange for students to meet with the person who was assigned to critique their design. Encourage students to begin with the positive features of the draft design and then to suggest, in a respectful and tentative manner, the aspects for possible improvement and possible modifications to consider. Direct students to consider the feedback they have received when preparing the final version of their commemorative coin.

Share designs with class

- Arrange for students to share their final designs with the rest of the class by posting them at the appropriate location on the timeline. Invite the class to discuss how well the various designs capture the significance of the events. Alternatively, collect the designs and distribute several to groups of students. Invite each group to identify the events commemorated by the designs it has been given.

- Assess students' evidence and rating of the historical significance of their events (either prepared individually on Blackline Master #2 or presented as a group) using the rubric *Assessing the rating of events* (Blackline Master #5). According to this rubric, the chart is assessed on three criteria:

- the evidence is accurate, relevant, and comprehensive;
- information is clearly restated in student's own words;
- ratings are plausible.

- Assess the effectiveness of the final versions of the commemorative coins using the rubric *Assessing the commemorative design* (Blackline Master #3). According to this rubric, the designs are assessed on five criteria:

- clearly recognizable images;
- important features;
- aesthetically pleasing;
- evocative images;
- balanced treatment.

Blackline Master #5

Assessing the rating of events

	Outstanding	Well Developed	Competent	Meets minimum expectations	Underdeveloped
Accurate, relevant, and comprehensive evidence	The information is accurate, clearly relevant, and comprehensive of the important facts for each criterion.	The information is accurate, relevant, and includes the most important facts for each criterion.	The information is largely accurate, generally relevant, and includes a fair number of the most important facts for each criterion.	The information is often accurate and relevant and includes a few of the important facts for each criterion.	The information is often inaccurate or irrelevant and omits the most important facts.
Clearly restated in own words	The notes offer consistently clear summaries of the information in the student's own words.	For the most part, the notes clearly summarize the information in the student's own words.	The notes are generally clear but not consistently in the student's own words.	The notes are clear in parts and occasionally in the student's own words.	The notes are consistently unclear and confusing or copied directly from the sources.
Plausible ratings	Each of the ratings is highly plausible given what historians know about the event.	Ratings are generally plausible given what historians know about the event.	Most ratings are plausible given what historians know about the event, a few ratings are questionable.	Approximately half of the ratings are plausible given what historians know about the event.	Very few of the ratings are plausible given what historians know about the event.

Comments:

Name:

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Blackline Master #3

Assessing the commemorative design

	Outstanding	Well Developed	Competent	Meets minimum expectations	Underdeveloped
Recognizable figures	All figures in the design are easily identifiable.	All figures in the design are identifiable, but a few may require some guess-work.	Most, but not all, of the figures in the design are identifiable.	Some figures in the design are identifiable, but others are very difficult to interpret.	Very few figures in the design are identifiable.
Important features	The most important aspects associated with the event are represented in the design.	The most important aspects associated with the event are somewhat represented in the design.	Most, but not all, of the important aspects associated with the event are represented in the design.	A few important aspects associated with the event are represented in the design, but other key aspects are omitted.	Very few of the important aspects associated with the event are represented in the design.
Visually appealing	The design is arranged in an especially effective and visually appealing manner.	The design is competently arranged and generally appealing.	Most aspects of the design are arranged in an interesting and appealing way.	A few aspects of the design are arranged in an interesting and appealing way but other aspects disrupt the effect.	The design appears very cluttered or otherwise unappealing.
Emotive images	The images powerfully present the significance of the event.	For the most part, the images study present the significance of the event.	Most of the images present the significance of the event.	A few images present the significance of the event, but key aspects are not powerfully represented.	The images do not present the significance of the event.
Balanced representation	The images sensitively reflect various perspectives and include all the main perspectives of the event.	The images are generally sensitive to a variety of perspectives and include all the main perspectives of the event.	The images are sensitive to the event.	A few images present more than one point of view but do not capture all the main perspectives of the event.	The images present a narrow or one-sided view of the event.

Comments:

Name:

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Reference

Coinlink, 2007, July 24. "Coin evokes grim past for Inuit, leader says" Coin Collecting News: <http://www.coinlink.com/News/world-coins/coin-evokes-grim-past-for-inuit-leader-says/>